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**Leah's Law— AB566
Testimony before the Assembly
Committee on Criminal Justice
February 27, 2008**

Relating to creating a registry for violent offenders, requiring the exercise of rule-making authority, and providing penalties.

Thank you Chairman Kleefisch and members of the Criminal Justice Committee for hearing Assembly Bill 566. You are here today because of the terrible circumstances that led to the brutal murder of Leah Gustafson, by her neighbor, on January 7, 2006, at her apartment in Superior, Wisconsin.

We can't change the past, but we have the power to impact the future safety of our family and friends. AB 566 will go a long way towards giving ordinary citizens the ability to know if their neighbors are violent persons and take measures to protect themselves before they find out the hard way. AB 566 provides reasonable parameters to help people feel safe in their home. AB566 will:

- create a violent offender registry;
- designate DOC to maintain the violent offender registry;
- set criteria for who must register and for how long;
- establish fines for intentional failure to comply; and
- require DOC to establish an Internet site containing information on the registry

Violent felons give up their right to privacy when they commit their crime. This information is already a matter of public record and law abiding citizens have a right to know who is living next door. Like our current Wisconsin Sexual Offender Registry, AB 566 will give citizens easy access to find out if these criminals are lurking in their own neighborhood.

Thank you again for hearing this bill and I encourage your support for Assembly Bill 566 as it makes its way through this committee and again when it comes for a vote before the full Assembly.